

Good morning. My name is Amanda Niven. I am leading the Trans* Leadership Project, and I am a person that you may find confusing. I grew up a gender nonconforming kid, meaning that I didn't express my gender in the ways that people might expect, and I suffered for it. I was bullied, called names, and ostracized.

Now, I'm a trans, genderfluid, gender nonconforming adult, meaning that my gender, how I feel inside, and how I show that to the world, doesn't fit into what a lot of folks might expect. I'm also a single mom.

My son, Jonah, is 4 years old, and he is the best person that you've ever heard of or could hope to meet. He just started preschool, and his teacher said that she has never once see him be unkind. He is a good friend to everyone. Like me, Jonah is gender nonconforming. He loves to dress up as Spiderman and play with trains and blocks. He also loves to dress up as the princess from Frozen and dance around singing "Let It Go." He likes to wear 8 barrettes in his hair.

At preschool, I watch him suffer in some of the same ways that I suffered. Luckily, I can still protect him most of the time, but at some point he will have to brave the world on his own.

I do not want him to have to suffer as an adult, as I have. I do not want him to ever be told that he will not be fired "as long as he doesn't rub it in anybody's face," as has been said to me. I want him to be treated fairly and judged on his merits.

We, the trans* community, cannot wait any longer. Please do not force us to continue living in a world where our only refuge is each other. Please support this long-awaited and desperately needed updated to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. Thank you.